

KEN SALAZAR  
COLORADO

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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

WASHINGTON, DC:  
702 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510  
(202) 224-5852

COLORADO:  
2300 15TH STREET  
SUITE 450  
DENVER, CO 80202  
(303) 455-7600

<http://www.salazar.senate.gov>

December 10, 2007

The Honorable Pete Geren  
Secretary of the Army  
1600 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Secretary Geren:

As the Army finalizes its plans to increase its end-strength by six brigade combat teams (BCT) over the coming years, I would like to highlight the many benefits that Colorado offers our military and ask that you carefully consider Fort Carson as a potential site to host one of these new brigades.

Colorado is proud to be the home to Mountain Post, which is among the best Army bases in the country for equipping, training, and mobilizing our soldiers. The Pikes Peak region, where Fort Carson is located, provides our soldiers and families a terrific quality of life, a wide range of opportunities, and a community with a long history of support for our men and women in uniform. Fort Carson has grown considerably over the past few years but is, in my view, well suited to host additional units and missions.

There are many factors that help make Colorado a great home to our service members, their families, and our military bases. Residents and community leaders, for one, are eager to provide whatever support they can for our men and women in uniform. The Colorado congressional delegation has been working with the Army, for example, to create buffers around Fort Carson to prevent encroaching development from limiting the Army's use of critical training ranges. We have also been working to ensure that transportation infrastructure in the region is ready to handle the growth of the Mountain Post to approximately 25,000 soldiers. Thanks to the coordinated work of the delegation, regional transportation planners, the State of Colorado, and the Army, we are making swift progress on several projects that are important to Fort Carson, including a multimillion dollar expansion of Gate 20 and the adjoining interchange. The community has a long track record of working closely with Fort Carson to ensure that we are meeting the priorities of our military families and the installation.

In addition to strong public support for the military, the Pikes Peak region also offers an unparalleled quality of life. Colorado's schools produce some of the best students in the country. We are adding capacity to the primary and secondary schools near Fort Carson to accommodate the installation's growth, while local colleges and universities are always eager to provide additional educational opportunities to soldiers and their families. The University of Colorado, Colorado State University, Colorado College, and Colorado Technical University all have campuses in the area.

When soldiers discuss why they enjoy being stationed at Fort Carson, they often tell me about the recreational resources in our state. Within a short drive from Fort Carson they can hunt, fish, hike, bike, camp, or ski in some of the West's most spectacular landscapes. They can also visit scenic attractions like the Garden of the Gods, the Royal Gorge Bridge, the Pikes Peak Highway, the Broadmoor Hotel, and the Cripple Creek and Victor Narrow Gauge Railroad. Area residents are among the most active and healthy in the country.

The high quality of life that the Pikes Peak region provides – from educational opportunities and healthcare to a low cost of living and recreation – benefits not only the health and well-being of our soldiers and their families, but it improves retention. It is often said that you recruit a soldier, but you retain a family. I am told over 90% of families stay in the local area when their loved one deploys. This is owing to the great support the community offers our Fort Carson family.

The military value of the Mountain Post is tremendous. It is one of the Army's premier training locations, with ranges at Fort Carson and at the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, 130 miles to the south. The four brigades that are assigned to Fort Carson have access to over 305,000 acres of training and maneuver space, far more land per brigade than most similar installations. Although the Army has stated a desire to expand the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, a plan which it needs to justify further, it appears that Fort Carson is, with existing resources, better able than other Army installations to support the training needs of an additional brigade.

Furthermore, there is ample space on Fort Carson to house another brigade complex, including barracks, headquarters, and a motor pool. If the brigade complex were constructed south of the existing cantonment area, near Wilderness Road and Butts Army Airfield, soldiers could access the post through a reopened Gate 19. This would better enable the City of Pueblo, south of Fort Carson, to offer its resources to soldiers and their families.

As you finalize your plans for growing the Army, I ask that you take Fort Carson into careful consideration as a host for an additional brigade. Fort Carson has sufficient capacity and ample facilities, ranges and training acreage to provide superior training for its soldiers. The Pikes Peak region and the State of Colorado are strongly supportive of the United States military and offer an unparalleled quality of life to our military families.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information that may assist you with your decision. As always, thank you for your service to our country and for your support for our soldiers and their families.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar  
United States Senator